N° 48 December 1986

# èchanges

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## PUBLICATIONS

### United Kingdom

Radiation - 'You can't feel it, see it, smell it or taste it, but it can kill you'. Anonymous leaflet on the effects of radiation. (copy at Echanges)

Counter Information - Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemakers Row, Edinburgh.
- N° 10 - May/June '86. Stopping Wapping. Strikes and pressure at Monktonhall Colliery - Contracts LTD (French Connection): strikers sold out by unions - Morris' Furniture factory (near Glasgow): for 39 hours a week - The unwaged and the traditional Labour Movement.
- N° 11 - August/September '86. Under Siege (South Africa) - Battling on (on the fight of the sacked News International print workers) - Getting our own back (on massive coal stealing by unemployed people) - 18 Weeks of strike at Purnells Printing-Bath.

Solidarity c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E 6. N° 12 - Summer 1986 (A Journal of Libertarian Socialism) - South Yemen and the socialist dream - Is anarchy boosting corporate profits? - Workers' party grows fast in Brazil.

Einstein is no laughing matter (Financial Times 17/10/85) Employees at a Taiwanese computer company in Telford (Shropshire) have been banned from laughing at work. It is only one example of the rules imposed on workers in the high-technology sector. Other examples have included the banning of beards and the prohibition of smoking, drinking and eating in production areas. (copy at Echanges)

Picket (see Echanges N° 47) - c/o Housmans' Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N 1 9 DX - is still published and available at the same address. Wapping pickets and demonstrations are still bringing their weekly harvest of guerilla actions. This printers' fight will get soon its first year birthday.

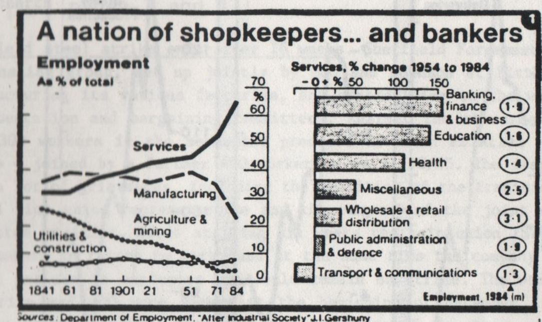
Serious accidents at work continue to increase (Financial Times 16/10/85). Serious and fatal injuries rose last year (1985) to 87 for every 100.000 manufacturing workers. It was 79 in 1983, 74 in 1982 and 71 in 1981. The most dangerous sectors are construction and demolition (3 killed each week in 1984) and maintenance (2 killed).

Jobs, pay and politics (Financial Times 31/1/86). Refering to an OECD-analysis, in UK. manufacturing, where employment is 25% lower now than in 1979 and is still falling, wages have been growing at an annual rate of 9%, more rapidly than elsewhere.... UK's labour market is a bizarre laboratory specimen. Their defeatist conclusion is that government policies are essentially along the correct lines but are most unlikely to show results in so strange an environment: 'The British are different.. The OECD is the first to admit that the Thatcher government has done a great deal to bolster the economy's supply side: employment legislation, tax reform, privatisation, etc... But non of these measures have had any significant impact on wages, which have grown faster in real terms than under the last labour government'. (copy at Echanges)
Another article on this subject: High pay settlements defy jobless figures (Times 29/3/86). It insists - with figures from the CBI - on the fact that the important differences in the rate of unemployment in the different parts of the UK are without influence on the wages, which are rising the same rate everywhere.

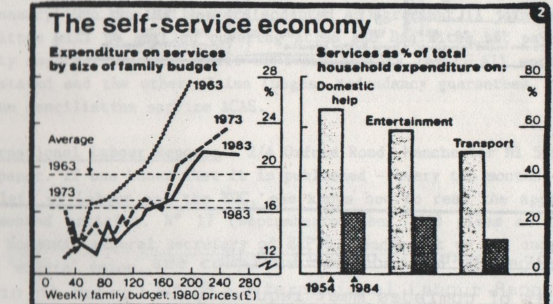
Servicing the economy (The Economist 30/11/85). With twice as much workers in services as in industry, Britain should more accurately be described as a 'service economy'. However, although real personal disposable income in Britain has more than doubled since 1950, the volume of spending on services has fallen slightly as a portion of consumer's expenditure. Over the past 30 years, the price of services has risen by a factor of 12, the price of consumer durables by only 6. People have satisfied their demand for services by buying durable goods and producing services themselves at home. In 1954 56% of household expenditure was supplied by services and 44% by goods. Last year (1984) the share of services was down to 17%. (copy at Echanges)
--- (charts page 3) ---

Secret ballots do more harm than silver bullets (Guardian 11/2/86). How the new laws are used as a tool against management. The government hoped that the secret ballot would galvanise union members into expressing what the government and management would call 'the voice of reason', less eagerness to take extremes of action. Managers think now that the 'modernized democratic system' has been used as an effective tool devastating to management. On the basis of a show of hands, the company would be confident that actual support for actions would be less strong than the vote results had suggested. The vote provided everybody with the evidence that the workers really intended to strike. Union and managers had so to agree on an increased pay offer. (copy at Echanges)





Sources: Department of Employment, "After Industrial Society" J.I.Gershuny

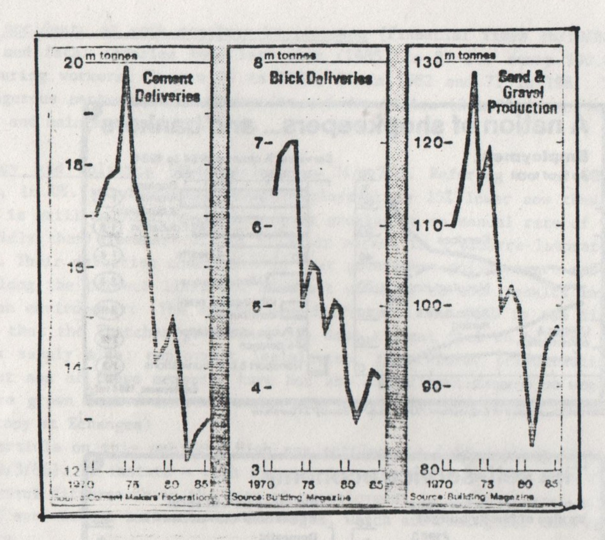


Sources: Bank of England, "After Industrial Society" J.I.Gershuny

## THE PRODUCTIVITY RECORD

| | Output (1980=100) | Employment '000s | Productivity (1980=100) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 100 | 415 | 100 |
| 1981 | 82.9 | 359 | 95.8 |
| 1982 | 79.6 | 321 | 103 |
| 1983 | 83.9 | 307 | 113.4 |
| 1984 | 81.3 | 292 | 115.6 |
| 1985 | 86-87* | 284 | 126* |

* estimates — Collated by Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders




A Movement For Workers 'Councils In UK

A small number of comrades meet regularly in London in order to find a form of propaganda group around the idea of worker councils . More information will be given in the next issue of Echanges but if you are interested you can write to Echang You will get a direct answer and information on aims and on public meetings to be held monthly .
Some reprints have been issued by this group :
- Workers'Councils by Anton Pannekoek (from Living Marxism -I
-The Wilhelmshaven Revolt by Ernst Schneider )
- The Launching of the I W W by Paul F Brissenden .
(review of these pamphlets in next issue .



Some figures on economical trends: 1970 - 1985
— (charts pages 3 and 4 )

Sheffield steel strike ends after 16 weeks. Sheffield Forgemasters, forging and casting group, set up jointly by BSC and Johnson at Firth Brown, was restructuring its various factories, and centralising on the way the union representation and bargaining committees. Against the stewards recommendation 300 workers in the aerospace products division at Atlas site went on strike - joined by a further 450 workers - on 17/10/85. The dispute springs from a lot of grievances, including the abolition of the traditional post of a full time union representative and the removal of the joint shopstewards committee at Atlas. After striking six weeks the main union ISTC instructed its members to return to work, and at the same time the company issued dismissal notices to employees who would remain on strike. The workers stayed on strike and 700 were sacked at the beginning of december 1985. Sacked workers mounted pickets outside other factories of the group. At the River Don plant only 12 out of 1.000 workers crossed the picketline. On the 31th of January 1986 the 700 workers accepted an agreement. A joint shop steward committee will be settled covering Atlas and Don sites but pay and productivity negotiations will shift to every factory level. All workers will be reinstated and the other claims (wages, redundancy guarantees, etc) will go to the conciliation service ACAS.

International Labour Reports - 2/4 Oxford Road, Manchester M1 5QA - is not a new paper. If one knows that it is published - every two months - by and for the left of Labour and the TUC, one knows how to read the apparently well documented articles. N° 17 (september/october '86) gives an interview of Eric Hammond, general secretary of EEPTU. Reading it we can understand what is a 'modern' union. see complete text bottom of pages I2 to 27
I.L.R =International Labour Report
E.H. = Eric Hammond .

Italy

Maelström - Accademia dei Testardi, CP 16, 55061 Carraia, Italy. November 1985 - On Wolf Woland 'Radical Theory and Class Struggle (and terrorism)'. Discussion of this text which is an introduction to Vaneigem 'Terrorism and Revolution'. - Recent Past, a series of articles on the group Cementismo of the early 70's and a more interesting description of 1977 in Rome (the movement(s), etc. (Also several other articles)

FIAT - 4 articles in La Republica entitled 'Discovering new production systems' (27/6/86; 1+3/7/86 and 5/7/86).
A recent survey among workers at FIAT conducted by the CGIL trade union found that the workers were more inclined to discuss work problems with their foremen than with the union representatives. This weakness of the unions in FIAT is also beginning to seriously worry the owners and managers. Six years ago, when FIAT began sackings and lay-offs, the owner, Agnelli, made this statement in an interview:

Q. You've put the union in a tight corner.

A. I know, and I'm not pleased at all. You know why things go wrong in Italy? Because the unions are disunited and weak very often. In FIAT, union membership is 41%,...below the national average of 60%. (La Republica, 10/10/79)

Now the unions are weaker still (for years nobody stood for election as representative in the plant, the referenda campaigns were almost inexistent), so the situation (for the management) is even worse. In the recent interview, the manager of FIAT-Auto, Ghidella, showed that he was worried about the "Japanization" of work and wished to push the idea of 'worker-manager' ('operaio conduttore') in place of the famous mass worker 'operaio di massa', the protagonist of the 60's and 70's. What this new figure is, is still unclear: it is a kind of hybrid of the workers and the lower level white collar grades in the same work area. This obviously creates new tensions: the white collar workers saw their pay advantages eroded by the inflation linked pay increases and did not support the strikes of the 70's. So in this marriage:

'Unfortunately in this, the old-minded unions are of little help.'

Q. 8 Years ago there were wildcat conflicts (in FIAT)..

A. In that period I managed RIV*, and despite a strong and paleo-marxist union, there wasn't the hysterical conflict like at FIAT.

(*RIV - once the bearings section of FIAT, its factories are mainly in and around the Agnelli home town, then sold to the Swedish SKF when it had financial difficulties)

Thus the productive system, having changed work relations and coincidentally having massacred the paleo unions, now has to call for a new type of union. The union is no longer thought of as a conveyer belt, nor even as the robotized work area, but as an automatic work station, linked to others by the objective situation of production.

## USA

Fighting off unions Ingersoll-Rand (machine tools) uses wide range of tactics. It moves plants, drops lines and wins workers votes (Wall Street Journal 14/6/85). In the past few years Ingersoll Rand has moved production from union plants in the North to non-union plants in the South. Similar strategies are being employed succesfully by other big industrial companies that once were union strongholds. Union power has been fading in such troubled industries as steel and coal where companies typically confront a single union. But the loss of union strenght is even more pronounced in companies that, like Ingersoll-Rand, lack one dominant union. When we see the details of the management anti-union tactic, we can see it is only part in a wide puzzle to remove all non-profitable business. In such periods with the threat of closing factories, it is even easier to persuade workers to vote to decertify the union. After that, the next move is to restructure, moving, sacking workers or increasing exploitation. (copy at Echanges)

How power will be balanced on Saturn's shopfloor (Business Week 5/5/85). General Motors launches an experiment in self-management in order to increase productivity. This new car factory is supposed to start production in 1989 and its organisation is discussed with UAW. This project called Saturn will give to 6.000 car workers (80% of the workforce) a job for life - except in the case of 'catastrophic events'. The traditional hierarchy of bosses will give way to management union committees. The basic groups will be work units of 6 to 15 UAW-workers who will elect a 'counselor' amongst them and the team will decide who does which job. It will also maintain equipment, order supplies and set the relief and vacation schedules of its members; it will have a personal computer for keeping tabs on business data. Three to six work units will be part of a 'work unit module' led by a company adviser. A business unit made up of company representatives and elected union advisers plus specialists will coordinate plant level operators. A manufacturing advisory committee with the same kind of representatives will oversee Saturn complex. At the top, a strategic advisory committee will be the usual staff of high managers plus a top UAW adviser. (copy at Echanges)

Organised Labor at the cross roads (Bay Guardian) describes the situation of the Unions in California and analyses a report produced by a committee AFL-CIO: 'The changing situation of workers and their unions'. This report includes 28 recommendations, that unions adopt 'new approaches' to dealing with employees particularly in 'non-adversarial relations'. So the remedy proposed to overcome the present union crisis is a reinforcement of union bureaucracy and a bigger support to management. (copy at Echanges)

Wheeling Pitsburg strike (Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia). The first strike against a major steel producer since 1909, against an attemp to bring lower wages. A judge ruled that the company could legally annul its existing labor contract and a new contract was presented to the unions: wages and benefits cut by 18%. The strike begun on the 21/7/85 and was lost at the end. (various articles - copies at Echanges)

Factory automation - a surprisingly rough ride for almost everybody (Financial Times 7/7/86). The article deals with the difficulties many companies (including Japanese ones) are having to make profits from advanced factory automatic systems. These difficulties stem from the main causes: because of the fierce competition, the anticipated growth has not yet happened and with it no profits and no returns for capital. The time and the cost of computer programming are notoriously impredictable in most applications. Industry is filled with horror stories of automation projects running late and over budget because of software problems. Another sobering discovery for top managers is that large automation projects tend to have major impact on how a factory and even the entire company operates. (copy at Echanges)

News and Letters - 59 E. van Buren, room 707, Chicago, Ill. 60.605. March '86 Hormel strike. April '86, Vol. 31, N° 3: Mass. G.E. workers wildcat for stewards. Hormel rally in Detroit. Ohio farmworkers' victory. May '86, Vol.

31, N° 4: Mexico in ferment: strikes, protests, discussions, challenge ruling powers. 5.000 Rally in Hormel strikers' defence. A second look at Marx' mathematical manuscripts. July '86: AT&T: the strike as seen by the pickets. August-September '86: New battlefields for the working class: steelworks, food industry, car factories. Council workers in Detroit. Lockout at Oscar Mayer (meat packing).

Fifth Estate - PO Box 02548, Detroit, Mic. 48202. Winter/spring '86: 20 Years of 5th Estate. Anarchism in the age of Reagan (from Anti-autoritarians Anonymous). Summer '86: Resistance to the plan is heavy. Remembering Kent State University (May 4th 1970: a tragic episode in the fight against the Vietnam war). Spain '36. Terrorism and Media.

Labor Notes - PO Box 200001, Detroit, Mich. 48220. July '86: Hormel strike. August '86: End of Hormel srike. Lockout (frozen food) at Watsonville (Cal). South Africa.

Discussion Bulletin - PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, Mi 4950. N° 17 May '86: Letters from Mark Shipway, Ray Rawlings, Richard Lambach, Laurens Oter, Monroe Prussach, Ed Willey, l'Insécurité Sociale (on unions), Tim Mills, John Zerzan and answers. N° 18 July '86: Articles and correspondence on The Third Camp Movement of the 1950's (Part I). Review of M. Kowalski's book: 'Marxism and Totality'. Neo-utopianism and anti-neo-utopianism. Adam Buich: on the impracticability of the labour voucher system. Workers Democracy (Jeff Sutter).

In These Times, The Independent Socialist Paper, 1300 Belmont Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60657. March 26/'86: On a 18 day schoolbus strike in Boston. July 9/'86: South Africa: state of emergency. Watsonville strike. July 23/'86: South Africa. Israël. Great Britain.

Synthesis, A newsletter and journal for social ecology, deep ecology and bioregionalism - PO Box 1858, San Pedro, Ca 90733. April '86, N° 22: Green movement or green politics? Green politics in Canada. Review of 'Deep Ecology' (collection of articles) and of 'Bilding the Green Movement' (collection of interviews and Essays of Rudolf Bahro, author of 'The Alternative in Eastern Europe). Bahro's conclusion is quoted (when he resigned from the German Greens):

> 'This experience is the end of traditional political experience altogether. At last, I have understood that a party is a counter productive tool, that the given political space is a trap into which life-energy disappears, indeed where it is rededicated to the spiral of death.. It is directed not at the original project which is today called 'fundamental', but at the party.. I am not becoming unpolitical. I want to contribute to creating a new place and new practice'.

Processed World, 55 Sutter Street, Apt 829, San Francisco, Ca. 94104. N° 16/Spring '86: Correspondence. The Dossier Society. South Africa: laboratory of repression. Hot under the collar. The accomplice. Waiting for Josie. N° 17/Fall '86: Special-Tales of Termination Issue. The making of a bad attitude (un abridged history of my wage slavery). Termination X2-Charley Browno (where everything is Prince). Lose Jobs now, ask me how. Chemicals run amok in the 'Clean Room'. Where's the dirt?. Flecing Muscles at Flax (Anatomy of Service Sector Organizing). Pursuit of Happiness.

Internationalst Perspective, (External fraction of the International Communist Current). N° 2/Spring '86: International class struggle: the gathering storm. South Africa: Anti-Apartheid: a mystification against the workers struggle. Haïti, Philippinos: Different faces, same misery. The USA reinforces war-ideology. The military preparations of the Russian bloc. The real target of anti-terrorism: the class struggle.
International Perspective is published: in English, USA - PO Box 1748, Montclair, NJ 07047; UK - BM Box 8154, London WC I N 3 XX; in French: Belgium-Destryker - BP 1181, Centre Monnaie, 1000 Bruxelles.

The Nation - 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Issues in July (5 and 29) produced several articles: 'America moves right. Big Business deserts the Democrats', dealing with the removal of the support to the Democrats from big business and a new attempt of the Democrats to find a new political basis to get back this support. We can see how political battles are closely linked to the development of capital and the softening of its social consequences. A special artical: 'The trouble with full employment' (17 May 1986) analysis this last question. (copies at Echange)

Crime panel urges broad US Attack on the Teamsters (New York Times 7/3/86). The influence of the organized crime over the Teamsters' union is 'so pervasive' that the Government should consider removing union officers and placing union activities under court supervision, a Federal commission say's. New details on the subject. (copy at Echanges)

US Workers' loyalty to Companies Wanes as disillusion mounts (Wall Street Journal 12/7/85). Mergers and Job cuts alter priorities of employees: costs to firms are high. Many managers and workers who once devoted all their energy to their jobs are now concluding that such devotion was misplaced. High turnover, readiness to leave when possible, rising absenteism, priority to personal life, low morale, etc, are among the most frequent company complaints on the employees' commitment to the firm and to their job. (copy at Echanges)

Productivity Spies. Computers keep eye on workers to see if they perform well - Typists and phone operators are among the watched: managers hail the results. (Wall Street Journal 3/6/85). New techniques allow a better spying of employees' work. But their are still some loopholes in the process. Nevertheless, most of the spyed workers can't escape: we can see the results on their health and on the quality of their work. (copy at Echanges)

Unions divided: the revolt of the rank and file (Business Week 11/8/86). In industry after industry, locals are defying the national leadership. We can see worker dissent causing problems in recent struggles (GM workers -1983; Kruger stores -1984; General Electric - 1985; Watsonville Canning -1985; Hormel -1985; City of Detroit -1986. (copy at Echanges)

At Sanyo's Arkansas plant the magic is not working (Business Week 14/7/86). This article describes a violent strike in Forrest City (Arkansas), Sanyo-factory. It is supposed to show the difficulties of modern capitalism (japanese one in this case) to have its new methods working well in a very traditional (they will say backward) environment. But doing so, it shows something else far more important: the real nature of class struggle. We can understand it from two declarations. One from a community leader: 'People here are still trying to get over the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on integration of schools, yet Sanyo is asking them to accept Japanese ideas and technology'. The other one is from a top manager, the Sanyo vice-president: 'In a community as small as Forrest City, it's hard to understand that people who live down the street from you would destroy your personal property'. In fact during the strike 'windows were broken, guns were fired, cars were overturned and at one point the plant was nearly overrun by the strikers'. So nobody understood the reaction of people 'uneducated, poor and apprehensive of change' in a 'small, isolated town of conservative values'. What they could not understand is that class struggle is not connected to their education or opinions in the society or milieu, but directly bursts up from being considered as mere objects in the system of explcitation either modern or out of date. (copy at Echanges)

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Hong Kong

Letter, 2/9/86

'You will recall that almost 2 years ago I published a left-communist journal called 'International Correspondence'. In the english supplement of N° 2 I mentioned having written and published two texts in chinese, one on the politico-economic nature of the so-called 'socialist societies', the other on the degeneration of the russian revolution. In fact I gave an extremely brief outline of the structure of the two texts. Over the past 1½ years or so, I have written english versions of these two texts for the purpose of the international distribution, as I believe they, with an analysis which is radically different from the 'mainstream' left-communist analysis of the questions/topics concerned offered by the International Communist Current, the Communist Workers Organization, etc., are of some importance. I am now publishing these English versions (not translations) in book-form and I am seeking assistance to distribute the book internationally. The book is 300-pages long and is priced at US$5/£4 which is just enough to cover costs and seamail postage (add US$2/£1.50 for airmail). The reason I am writing to you now is twofold:

1) To see if you can help distribute it to your contacts and to bookshops anywhere in the world that you are able to cover; for this purpose, I would appreciate it if you could inform me as soon as possible, stating the number of copies that you need and which cities in which countries you can cover.

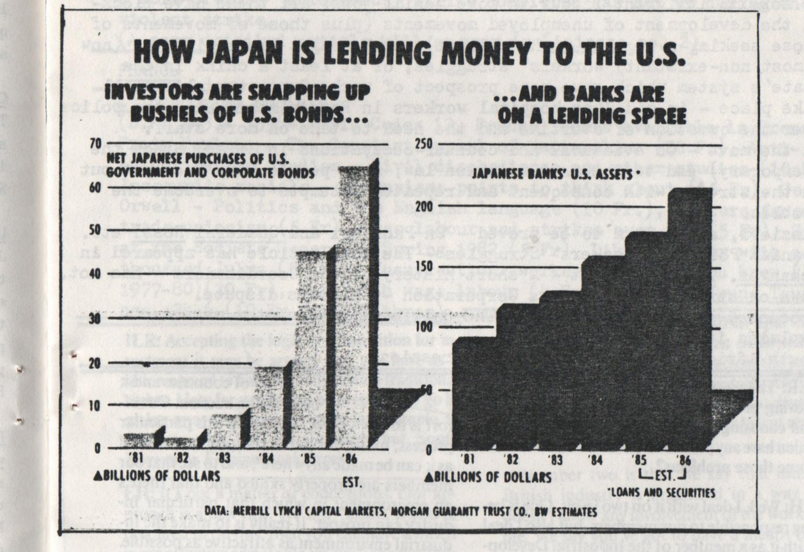


2) To see if you can publish this letter in your newsletter together with my address, so that the readers who are interested can contact me directly. For this second purpose, allow me to enumerate the sections of the two texts as follows. The first text: Preface, Value, Commodity, the Law of Value, Capitalism & Current 'Socialism', What is socialism?, Addendum. The second text: In Defense of the Socialist Nature of the Russian Revolution, Method & Analytical Framework, The Economic Theory & Practice of the Russian Revolution: part one (Industry) and part two (Agriculture), The Establishment & Destruction of the Dictatorship of the proletariat, The Russian Revolution's Theory & Practice - a/b) The organization of the Soviet Government: Theory & Practice (parts One and Two); c) The Relationship between the Party, the State & the Working Masses; d) The Crushing of Kronstadt: the final defeat of the Russian Revolution, Exporting the Revolution, Conclusions.

Address - (without any other mention) - PO Box 44007, Shaukeiwan Post Office, Hong Kong.

FRANCE

The student movement in november and december and the railways strike in december and january are very important events . The next issue in english will give informations and analysis on this important step in the class struggle .



Collegamenti Wobbly No. 18, Autumn-Winter 1986
The Stock Exchange or your Life - An article on recent developments in the stock market in Italy. The changes in the law allowing the launching of unit trusts for the masses (or those with money), the slowing of inflation and the taxing of government bonds which began to affect savers, continuous messing about with the housing market which made real estate development less attractive and lastly, but not least the much improved performance of Italian industry with FIAT at its head have led to an impressive increase in the value (and quantity) of stocks on the Italian stock exchanges. The exchange, however, is still small fry compared with the international exchanges and, if one takes into account changes in the City, well behind in organizational terms. The article stresses the divergence between this reality and the image capitalism wishes to provide of itself - the 'people' can now invest in industry and do well. As ever, as the article concludes: one does not become wealthy by working, which is also one of the main weaknesses of Italian capitalism, still based on protectionism, rather than competition.
The unemployed without a movement and the movement of the market - An article on the fall in employment in the large industries, the inability of the state (financially) to continue further with creating new jobs, the growing gap between North and South and the introduction of foreign immigrant labour in more menial jobs: all these have blocked the development of unemployed movements (plus those of movements of those seeking a regular work contract) which sought links with the (now almost non-existant) workers' struggles, or at least a chink in the state's system which gave some prospect of work. Some struggles still take place - in mid June hospital workers in Rome clashed with the police over the question of overtime and the need to take on more staff.
On the move - On evictions and counter-occupations in Milan. Since the (temporary) end to the anti-eviction law, many people have been put out on the street, with consequent and repeated attempts to overcome the problem.
Panzieri, a paradigm to be proved - On Panzieri and Quaderni Rossi etc.
Spanish Ports and Dockers' Struggles - The same article has appeared in Echanges. The supplement - A short history of the Coordinadora - has not.
News on strike - On the News Corporation - Printers dispute.
Processed Word: An Interview - The Californian 'computer magazine' explains its struggle.
South Africa: the Laboratory of Repression

**ILR: The electronics industry is notorious for moving production around the world, picking and choosing where it will invest. Do you as a union have any particular policies on how to overcome those problems?**

**EH:** Well, I deal with it on two levels. One is being responsible to our members, but also I deal with it as a member of the Industrial Development Advisory Board which advises government on new investment. Very often a possible investment is being hawked around a number of countries and it becomes an auction. Our effort is to say, "Look, we can do this particular process, make this particular product, as well as it can be made anywhere", and to see that our members are properly skilled and that there's an environment in which that particular industry can prosper. It really is to make the industrial environment as attractive as possible.



BELGIUM
Le Communiste - central organ of the Internationalist Communist Group (address: BP 54 - BXL 31 - 1060 Bruxelles, Belgium)
South Africa: class struggle against racial conflict - Theories of decadence and decadence of theories, Part 1: methodology - Our interventions in England, Belgium and France (leaflets) - Brest-Litovsk: the peace is always the peace.
April 1986:- Kronstadt: attempt to break with the capitalist state in Russia - On the concept of bureaucracy - Worker's Diary: "Should one take over or destroy the trade-unions?" (from l'Ouvrière Communiste 1929)

Strike in the Limburg mines
In November 1985, 20,000 Limburg miners, who had been called out on strike for one day by their union to oppose a restructuring programme that envisaged 3,700 dismissals, stayed out for a week and only returned to work when the plan was withdrawn. Leaks published in the press concerning a new closure programme led to wildcat strikes in the pits mentioned and the miners succeeded in halting production in most pits. This situation forced the unions to decide on April 21st. to declare a general, unlimited strike. Apart from the traditional union forces (socialists and christians), extreme leftists (maoists) and groups of the extreme right (Flemish nationalists) tried to become leaders of the movement. This lead to a reedition of situations like in the 1960's when a more-or-less "autonomous" strike committee was set up during the very violent strike.
(A more detailed article will appear in Liaisons no. 2).

FRANCE
L'Insécurité sociale
(B.P. 243 - 75564 Paris Cedex 12, France) Texts available in French; Fredy Perlman - The Constant Appeal of Nationalism (20 Fr), Anti-Authoritarian Studies - Civil disobedience and other studies (10 Fr), Insecurite sociale - Communism: points to think about (15 Fr), George Orwell - Politics and the English language (10 Fr.), Workers faced with trade-unionism (5 Fr), Wage labour and strikes over pay (5 Fr), Strike at the Societe Generale, Spring 1982 (5 Fr), Like a summer with a thousand Julys (25 Fr), Insurrection: workers, if only you knew (Italy, 1977-80)(20 Fr), Down with wage labour (4 Fr), Magazine Jeune Taupe nos. 34-6 (10 Fr for all three)

**ILR: Accepting the logic of competition for investment it may be argued that you have as a union agreed to bargain away certain traditional rights. How far would you be prepared to go in giving away trade union rights, for example, to compete with not just Japanese but South Korean or Filipino workforces?**

**EH:** It's not a matter of concessions. Our approach is a new one. We say, "Look, if you're prepared to do this, then you can have a much more effective and stable set-up." The number one factor which we put to anyone we're negotiating with under these new rules is that we want an equality of status. Instead of what I call the 'obscenity of industrial apartheid', which is what pertains in most of British industry, we want equality right across the board. In making that advance you remove a lot of the problems that might otherwise lead to disputes, aggravations and certainly to the latent resentment that is always there.

Number two is that we say that most of British industry is organized in a way that doesn't allow any involvement of the workpeople. We say you've got to have a means of involvement of the worker and that usually takes the form, in these new agreements, of what is variously called a "Members' Board" or an "Advisory Board", elected representatives of the

Explosions of Freedom: Spain 1936, Hungary 1956 by F. Mintz. This book is available from Acratie, BP. 23 - 64130 - Mauleon, France.

Jalons -Research, marxist studies for the revolutionary struggle. c/o L'Herbe Rouge - 1b Rue d'Alesia - 75014 Paris, France. The September number is dedicated entirely to the "Tragedy of the Austrian Proletariat" (1914-34); The revolt in the army - The January 1919 strike - From Empire to Republic - The attempted uprising - Reform or revolution - The Austrian Communist Party - Heimwehrem und Schutzbund - July 1929: right wing dictatorship - February 1934: social democracy and insurrection - Conclusions: anarchism, social democracy and austro-marxism.

La Banquise - a review of social criticism (BP 214 - 75623 Paris Cedex 13, France). No. 4 (in French) A world going to the dogs - Beneath work, activity - For a world without innocents - From Pretoria to Liverpool - The day when the bacteria stopped - News of the cold. The text "Beneath work, activity" starts as follows: "The proletarian movement halted about ten years ago on the threshold of the rejection of work. The work form is increasingly inadequate for human activity. The ungetatable goal of present day modern work reorganization is to maintain this form as a distinct sphere which draws its strength from what it is by definition separated: human life." Also the text "From Pretoria to Liverpool" can be resumed as: "On what conditions the collective bonds prior to capitalism or arising from it can lead to a common action of the proletariat? With the South African blacks, the English Miners, the French immigrants and the British West Indian youth a kind of community could, depending on the case, use its collective force and open to others to produce a common action, or could let itself be reabsorbed and enclosed in its identity."

Réseau Info Santé (BP 43 - 33322 Bègles Cedex, France). No. 9 (in French) Health and social infromation converging on or favouring individual autonomy - Medecine against health - Heal life.

Ce monde n'est pas la nôtre (BP 1013 - 49015 Angers Cedex, France) (in French). Critique of the revelations of Jordi Vidal - Remarks on the zones of the spectacle that are becoming industrialized - Jimmy Lallement.

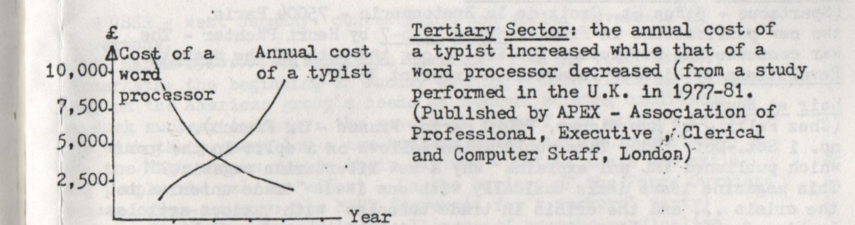
L'Intersyndicaliste - magazine of the GSED (Group of wage labourers for a distributive economy)(GSED - 11 Rue St. Vincent de Paul - 13004 Marseille, France)(in French).
No. 15 (September-November 1985) - For an end to wage labour, where are the unions? No. 17 (March-May 1986) A series of graphs on investment and unemployment. Graphs from L'économie libérée (M. Duboin).

workforce coming together to have put before them the information required to understand what decisions have to be taken. Again it removes areas of difficulty, creates a better identity with the firm and makes it less likely that disputes will occur.

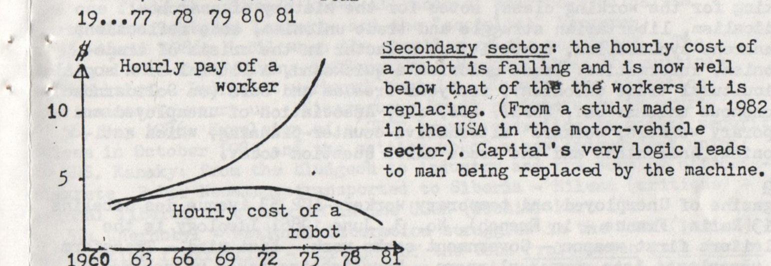
Thirdly we say that most modern firms want flexibility instead of the old demarcation lines and rigidity of craft, and we understand that. But the other side of that coin is the right to training and retraining.

If you have parity of status, involvement, and the right to training, you will have dealt with a lot of the problems that cause unrest in British industry. If you agree to those three things, we will have a system for dealing with disputes which avoids the need for industrial action. The usual method is using the ladder of a grievance procedure but at the end of it, if there's no answer, then it will be put before an independent arbitrator chosen from the ACAS panel, mutually agreed, who will have to choose between the union and the company's case.

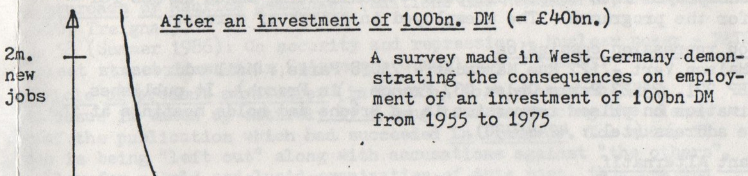





Tertiary Sector: the annual cost of a typist increased while that of a word processor decreased (from a study performed in the U.K. in 1977-81. (Published by APEX - Association of Professional, Executive , Clerical and Computer Staff, London)




Secondary sector: the hourly cost of a robot is falling and is now well below that of the the workers it is replacing. (From a study made in 1982 in the USA in the motor-vehicle sector). Capital's very logic leads to man being replaced by the machine.




A survey made in West Germany demonstrating the consequences on employment of an investment of 100bn DM from 1955 to 1975

**ILR: This is the so-called 'pendulum' (see previous page).**

EH: That's right. What it really poses is: are there agreements in Britain which are 'strike agreements'? Because if we have a 'no-strike agreement' the others must be 'strike agreements' (in which) it must be legal to strike, as if strikes are something of value in themselves. Of course, there are people, sects and nuts, who actually believe that in being involved in strikes workers find out how to struggle and this leads them on for the revolution. My view is that the trade union function is to deal with matters in a way which doesn't involve workers in industrial action.

50 years ago: the Spanish Revolution
(Spartacus - 5 Rue St. Croix de la Bretonnerie - 75004 Paris, two new publications in French: Spain 1936-7 by Henri Pâchter - The War consumes the Revolution (90 Fr), Along the path of the Spanish Revolutions by Nicolas Lazarevitch (reprint 35 Fr).

Noir et Rouge
(Chez Felix - 65 Rue Bichat, 75010 Paris, France - in French). no. 1 Set.-Oct. 1986. This publication follows on a split in the group which published IRL and explains "why a new libertarian magazine?" This magazine issue deals basically with one issue "trade unionism in the crisis ... and the crisis in trade unionism" with various articles: Looking for the working class, notes for the history of anarcho-syndicalism, libertarian struggle and trade unionism, some reflections on anarcho-syndicalism, competition, a factor in the crisis of trade-unionism, informatics: trade unionism's quicksand, a liberal or a social agricultural trade unionism?, for your freedom and ours (on Solidarnosc), autonomous unions: SLT, SNPIT, SDB, SDS, Association of unemployed and temporary workers, workers' alternative counter-planning, which anti-unionism, anarchists and the trade union question today.

Cash
(Magazine of Unemployed and temporary workers-ACP 53 Avenue des Gobelins 75013 Paris, France - in French). No. 3, June 1986: Ideology is the exploiters first weapon - Government seeks work - East wind - Transform the unemployed into coupon-clippers - Moonlighting makes us see red - Ask for the programme - The unemployed in search of a role.

Prison repression commission
(La Maison Vert - 127 Rue Marcadet - 75018 Paris : Mail address: CPR BP 771, 75123 Paris Cedex 03, France - in French). It publishes information on prison repression in La Brêche and holds meetings at the above address (tel.: 42465930).

Courant Alternatif
(OCL Monthly: OCL/Egregore - BP 1213 - 51058 Reims Cedex, France - in French). No. 52, January 1986: Repression launched against the magazine Otages - From 'La Galere' to the National Unemployed Federation (on unemployed demonstrations and independent attempts to organize) - Unions: where have the rank and file gone? (an attempt to deal with "trade union disaffection") - The union leadership faced with new labour management techniques and the "up-dating" of legislation, on the "militants'" response (autonomous unions etc.) - Movements for equal rights and against racism - Dossier on school and education - On the co-operative movement.
n° 53 , February 1986 : Green and despite ourselves -The fifth channel a master stroke - Immigrant detention centres - The Badinter Code (legal reform) - The war in Afghanistan: resistence and opposition



in the USSR - West Germany: contestation and social movements in West Germany.
No. 54, March 1986: Flexibility in the Rhone Poulenc Vitry factory - Hypermarkets: the beginning of Sunday opening - Disneyland in France: mainly on the American group's needs as regards working conditions - Lame duck nuclear industry: the revolt of Plogoff, an attempt to re-unite with the present (on a new nuclear power station in Britanny) - EMAF: the Maghrebians regain their culture - RATIF: there are still young people who make an effort - On the borders of the Force Ouvrière union and free-masonry: the MPPT (Movement for a workers' party) where one finds the already known alliance of anarcho-syndicalism, Hébert, the trotskyist Lambert, and the "socialist" Bergeron.
No. 55, April 1986: Until when the shambles of the passions? - The unemployed of Longwy:living differently - Working time: the multiple flexibilities - Immigrant workers' hostels - Kanaky: the situation never ceases to worry us - Nicaragua - Draft resisters up in court.
No. 56, May 1986: Expulsion of a CFDT branch operating in social security offices in October 1985 and the setting-up of a new independent union: the SDS. Kanaky: from the bludgeon to industry and the sorting offices - Margarete Buber Neumann: transported to Siberia - Milena (critique) - National liberation struggles in the USSR (dossier Part 1).
No. 57: Chernobyl - National liberation struggles in the USSR (Part 2) - Working time flexibility - Critique of the book Proletarian in a jacket an approach by Maurice Dommanget (Éditions des Monedières, Le Loubanel 19620, Treignac).
No. 58 (Summer 1986): On security and repression - Nuclear power - NATO - Fleet street drowned in Guinness - Guadeloupe - Kanaky.

Chronicle of present strategies (in French) No.4, November 1985: This issue is taken up entirely by a long text announcing the closure of the publication which had succeeded La Frondeur. Too much, it seems is being "left out" along with accusations against "the others", to allow for a bold and lucid examination of this pass, thus leaving in the shade some of the contradictions which we could all discuss. The statement does not contain, as the text says, a "past debt" since the statement of being "resolutely facing up to the future" and the "refusal to fall into despair" appears to be the antidote to well known developments. The end contains an appeal to confront and debate over a possible "going beyond" of their reflections and for possible meetings. The previous box number has been kept: BP105, Le Frondeur-94402 Vitry Cedex, France.

Agora Libertarian magazine
(BP 3098 - 31026 Toulouse Cedex, France - in French).
No. 31, February-March 1986: Quality circles, the bosses new look - Japan: the path of the profits - The post office: accuse each other -

So I don't believe that we've given anything away in these agreements. I think they're an advance in industrial relations, moving on to a better, perhaps more sophisticated way of dealing with the problems of industry. All we have done is to enlarge the areas which agreements normally cover to reduce to the very minimum the possibility of loss of time and industrial action, and I think in the process created a model which could serve a great deal of British industry. In the end, if we've got it all wrong, the fellows will go on strike, union or no union, whatever we say.

**ILR: There are cases where you have created agreements on behalf of a workforce which is not even in place. How do you overcome the problem, then, of democracy amongst the workforce itself, deciding its own agreements? What happens if they run counter to the agreements you have settled in advance?**

EH: A number of these are not 'green field' (new site) situations, they're collapse situations in which the workforce and the unions don't have many cards to play. Hitachi in South Wales was one of those. GEC just walked away from it and Hitachi had to be persuaded to stay. They

Tunisia: trade union resistence - On the ecologists: a trip through the green galaxy - 50 years ago: Spain 1936, the black and the red.

<u>Nothing human can be enforced by fear</u> (a leaflet in French). By the <u>Os Cangaceiros</u> on "Paris under a state of seige".

<u>Strikers sentenced to pay damages to non-strikers</u>
The Amiens Court of Appeal has confirmed the magistrates judgement which sentenced 24 strikers in a factory (600 workers, production of suitcases) to pay damages to 128 non-strikers to cover wages lost (250.000 Fr. = £25,000). This exceptional judgment, for France, is to be compared with new legislation in the U.K. which tends to allow bosses to seek damages if they feel they have been hit by "illegal" strike action. Here a recent judgement even awarded damages to a traveller to cover his costs arising from an "illegal" strike on the railways and which the ASLEF union will have to pay. Financial sanctions against strikes falling on the workers' shoulders seem therefore to be an addition to and possible later replacement of those the owner can use against the workers or the union. This indirect limitation to the right to strike shows more clearly than ever that the relations between workers and owners result directly from the balance of power, quite outside the channels of mediation.

<u>Thirty years of workers' struggles in the USSR</u> - pamphlet by the OCL/Courant Alternatif by Denis Jean. (address on p. 4 <u>sopra</u>)
This publication provides information we have on the struggles that took place in the USSR between 1953 and 1983. Its great merit is to have attempted to start from simple facts in situating these struggles in the context of the economic and political evolution of Russia. This helps to make the text clear, especially difficult in an area where the tremendous lack of information (itself this speaks volumes) means that the facts we get to hear about must be considered as a few short glimpses into a huge struggle, considering the size and the level of industrialization of the state of the USSR. It is certainly all too easy to extrapolate and interpret, but the text refuses to fall into this trap by outlining the existence and the limits to the movements of individual and collective resistence and the current called "free trade unions". Indirectly, it also puts in its correct place what the west exploits under the cover of "dissidence".

<u>USSR/East Europe</u> - <u>Itzok</u> Libertarian review on Esat Europe (BP 161-09 - 75422 Paris Cedex 09, France)(in French) No. 12, March 1986: <u>Poland</u> Homek: libertarian magazine - Interview with H. Wujec - <u>East Germany</u> outline of East German contestation and the soft revolt of youth - <u>Algeria</u> - <u>Bulgaria</u> the Bulgarian woman - <u>USSR</u> the death of V. Litvinov - Announcement of an irregular "Iztok Letter", a circular to supplement to review - available on order.

<u>Poland</u> - Acte de la recherche en sciences sociales (in French) (54 Boulevard Raspail - Paris, France). Solidarity and the workers' struggles in Poland 1970-80.
The text does not really contain any new material, except the indirect confirmation that the movement of class struggle in 1980 developed in such a way that any attempted control and manipulation by the embryonic apparatuses which constituted small circles of intellectuals and militants (notably around the KOR) could only fail. The authors state furthermore that the intellectuals "hypotheses on the mood of the proletariat are based on the opinions of a very small but very active minority". The say explicitly that in 1980 "the strike started suddenly and was too decentralized for the intellectuals to be able to moderate it in any way". Here we have the idea that runs through the whole text that the workers in struggle are to be moderated. This moderation should act through the channel of the "workers' organizations": "And one should ask oneself if it is not the case that what the workers' organizations can best learn from the intellectuals precisely that art of transposing and compromising" as a means to resist "the abuse of power without destroying oneself". These are the problems of organizations or intellectuals on the margins of the productive apparatus, for for the proletarians, they cannot be destroyed - they remain proletarians. While criticizing the leninist position which considers the workers as incapable of going beyond trade union consciousness, the authors recompose it after their fashion when they describe exactly what happened in Poland in 1980-2. They speak at length of the "capacity of the Polish workers to think and to act coherently and in a strictly limited manner". While stating that, compared with 1970, there was "a considerable difference in the level of political consciousness", the text attempts to establish at any price a hierarchical organization of the demands, scarcely worrying about the fact that this was the product of the "very small but very active minority" and that section of the workers who showed "disrespect as regards the intellectuals". "Some of them", the text adds " would have liked to have become a vanguard, but they were not allowed to become so". The authors produce a laborious classification of the demands to state that after innumerable lists of demands, the main one was for "free trade unions" and in second place that for "justice and egalitarianism", in some cases considered to be "audacious", in others "timid". A completely superficial conclusion, which falls into contradiction with other statements can be found in "the Polish workers, through their demands, were keenly interested in the state" by questioning all the party privileges, those of the army and militia too, and the fact that "the state decides everything". One can better understand this insistence on "free trade unions" and the role of the intellectuals when one reads the opinion of a socialist A. Smilar according to which "the workers showed a completely unrealistic radicalism in their object-

said it will have to be an entirely new agreement which is much more effective in terms of production than what we had before. What we had at GEC-Hitachi was no increase in pay but a strike every year for three years over pay until we made the new agreement. Now a Member's Board and Hitachi have worked out what they think is reasonable and it was put to a vote of all the people involved. We moved from a position of a mandate of all our members involved in the plant.

There are times when it is a 'green field' situation and we make an agreement. For instance we've just secured a recognition agreement with Sharps of Wrexham. When the plant is established and we've got our membership there, the agreement will be put to a vote of those members involved.

We had a joint course for firms that have got these sort of agreements in December last year – the first of its kind – which was concerned with how to convey and how to understand

ives, and political wisdom tempered their crude and brutal language"; this tempering being the work of Solidarity (following the intellectuals' advice) and considered as one of its "main contributions to the workers". This was, in fact, precisely the role of Solidarity and those around it, but which should be expressed more fully as the accomplishment of the function of a trade union in a society based on exploitation. This would lead one to understand the blocking of Solidarity and then its repression, because it was precisely this "unrealistic radicalism" which was quite concrete on the workers' part that prevented Solidarity and the intellectuals from playing this role.

Italy

Autogestione Quarterly review for anarcho-synicalist action (N.B. New address: c/o Mario Figliola - CP 4004 - 00182 Roma Appio Italy)(in Italian): No. 7, Dec. 1985: Pamphlet on the budget law. No. 12, May-July 1986: The national energy plan - Restructuring: employees' struggle and ideology in a factory in an advanced sector: the case of Foster Wheeler (Italy) - The vicious circle of wages - Technological innovation and professionalism: a new mode of production: self-management at Ford Argentina - The IMF: the excuse of the bourgeoisie and the left in the Argentinian situation - War and the indian question in Guatamala - Note on East-West relations - Poland: Solidarity betrayed - Spartaco Stagnetti: an anarcho syndicalist in the struggles of the Roman workers' movement.

Maelstrom Accademia dei Testardi (CP 16 - 55061 Carraia, Italy) (in Italian)
November 1985: On Wold Woland "Radical theory and class struggle (and terrorism)" - Discussion of this text, an introduction to Vaneigem Terrorism and revolution - On the recent past: a series of articles on the group Comontismo in the early 70s and a more interesting description of Rome in 1977 (the movements etc..) - Other articles.
One can find in La Banquise, (no. 4, see p. 2 above), entitled Italy 1977 a letter of explanation from an Italian comrade of Maelstrom describing the practice of the "militants of autonomy", "leninists à la Negri" as "a modern leninism, because one is no longer dealing with a formal organization bringing consciousness from the outside, but a compact ensemble rich in military prestige which influences the rank and file movement in which it is implanted so as to lead it by the spectacular effect of its actions and its organizational capacity as compared with all the other compoents of the movement... Rosso (the newspaper+group ed.) tends to be taken for the movement, taking it over and , at the same time, communicating actions and movements as those of a particular organization: such a group tends to mystify, to shuffle the cards, to present itself not merely as a part, but also as the representative

the information being provided by these Members' Boards. As I say, it's growing and you move from one thing to another trying to do the most sensible thing.

That's all part of our competition. That's arraying our stall, if you like. People say we're a market union – I don't know what it means but it's usually accompanied by 'US-type business union'. I wish we were more business-like because unions need to be business-like.



of the whole of the social autonomy and thus to struggle in all the situations where the proletarians fight the unions and the CP, but also in certain cases to withdraw militants from the struggles to reinforce the organization, or even to put a brake on the movement, so as to mould it to its particular organizational needs..."

FIAT has signed an agreement with the unions to take back all laid-off workers, in February 1986. In October 1980, 23,000 workers (15% of the workforce) were made redundant and placed on 80% of their gross earnings One had at any price to avoid that these "privileged unemployed" became part of an explosive situation. Today, the remaining 5,500 beneficiaries of this system (the others have since found other jobs or have retired) are to be progressively taken back by FIAT. The unions accepted this rehiring by conceding major increases in flexibility in the FIAT factories (weekend working, third night shift ... when production requires it) Throughout Italy there are still 500,000 laid off workers working only part time out of 3 million "official" unemployed.

Greece

Very little has been published about the strike wave against the socialist government's austerity programme in March and April. Alongside the trade unions linked to the socialist party which tried to play for time, a left wing opposition tried to exploit the conflicts, but entered into competition (two communist parties and a section of ex-socialists). Another type of agitation developed in parallel among the peasantry and the middle classes which the right and the extreme right tried to exploit. All sections of the economy seem to have been involved in strikes of greater or lesser length and with violent struggles against the police.

Spain

Restructuring in the Spanish ports: Four months of dockers' struggles
We cannot give a detailed chronological account of the strike here: one has already been made available in the dockers' publication La Estiba. What I want to do is to provide an analysis. According to me, this was a "classic" conflict, exemplified many times over in the last few years in Spain: workers' resistence to restructuring (or reconversion as one would prefer to say). But there is a difference in the dockers' case; the main unions (CCOO and UGT) are practically inexistant in the sector. The majority of the Spanish dockers belong to a different model of a union, the Coordinadora, the structure and function of which are linked to the assemblyist tradition from the period of the fall of franquism. The Coordinadora comprises about 90% of the dockers from all the Spanish ports. As in every union body, one can find tendencies towards bureaucratization, but these are rather reduced by the practice of speaking "openly", the dynamic of assemblies, the revocabil

**ILR: Despite this image of being the market union, there have still been times when you've shown distinct signs of solidarity. I was thinking, for example, of GCHQ (see previous page), where the EETPU has been vehement in its criticism.**

EH: We saw it as a matter of basic human rights.

**ILR: So what if a Nissan or Hitachi worker in Japan asked for your solidarity to put pressure on the company right up to taking industrial action against the company, would that be a possibility?**

EH: A possibility, but effective international action has been very thin on the ground and I can hardly see people in Britain endan... heir

ity of the representatives etc., and in the fact that there were no permanent representatives. All in all, it was a trade union that did not accept the principles of negotiations already imposed by the main unions in the country.

Restucturing in the ports was imposed by a socialist government decree-law. There had already been an attempt to reconvert the ports in 1980, but firm resistence by the dockers to the bosses and the port administration (which belongs to the state) led to the UCD plans being withdrawn. Five years later, in October 1985, the High Court declared the law invalid (see La Estiba, Oct. 1985). The socialist government replied to this set back with a new decree, which although it was completely new in form and seemed to accept the dockers' demands, was completely unacceptable for the dockers as it foresaw 3,000 dismissals, the division of the present dockers' collective into four categories (i.e. destroying the unity and homogeneity from which the dockers derive their strength) and above all removing the dockers from the control over the work process, transfering this to the entrepreneurs and port managers (the dockers' power on the dockside is very important).

At the same time, the new decree, even if it favoured the managers position as regards work conditions, simultaneously caused a process of capital concentration - there are still many companies working in the ports (27 in Barcelona alone). The decree envisaged the setting up of mixed companies (majority state shareholding) so as to provide the managers with some control over the workforce to begin with, then to offer concessions to private companies, especially multinationals, which in fact control shipping movements, as one saw at Algesiras.

The government's tactic was to last out until the elections so as to avoid conflict during the election run up. For this reason the dockers came out so as to force the government to publish the decree and to start negotiations. Strike calls began in March 1986: these were general limited strikes, but their length was to be extended progressively as the elections approached. They were effective enough to cause shortages (blown up by the press to attract public opinion against the strikers) in the Canary and Balearic Islands.

The strike cycle was initially supported by the CCOO and the very poorly represented CNT even if the latter was part of the Coordinadura in Barcelona. It was a success because it was supported by the dockers by and large except where the UGT had a majority position (Galicia, Pasajes, the Basque region). On the other hand, certain ports saw very spectacular events- clashes with the police at Gijon and Bilbao (where the strike had begun on April 25th.) - in Barcelona, where the strikers occupied the OTP offices (the body which runs the port on behalf of the state) and placed the regional autonomous government under pressure by using all the vehicles and locomotives of the port to block the roads and ramblas (boulevards) along with the square in front of the Town Hall and

employment in order to help a group overseas. Now it may be that we ought to be better organised in an international way, in international unions. My view is that inevitably we'll have to come to that. We can't have our well-being at the expense of the bad conditions for people elsewhere, but for people positively to do anything about it – well, as I say, I couldn't see that happening. Much as I feel we ought to be thinking in terms of an international attitude to companies. They certainly think in an international way.

I remember a few years ago going to China and walking through a television factory and



the Generalitat. The experience of the 1980 strike was very important in the fact that the government and businessmen did not take on strike breakers (some were ambushed and injured during the daily battles with the dockers). This explains that the "minimum levels" of service fixed by the civil governors during the strike were never respected, as they were then considered an abuse. The only boats to be unloaded (or loaded) were those carrying medical and hygiene products or perishable goods. The agreement of the dockers was always required. Only one boat was loaded under police and Guardia Civil protection.

There are two very significant points concerning this struggle. Firstly the manner in which the press reported it: it was unanimous as never before in attacking the dockers - they were called profiteers of the "privileges" of Franquism (the OTP had been established by Franco's fascist minister Giron during the 1940's), or even fascists, the Mafia Coordinadora running the corruption in the ports... Certainly the job of the press is to do what its masters call for, but this time the cynicism and manipulation of the facts reached new heights. From reading the papers, one would gain the impression that the workers struggling to hold onto the gains won during the stuggles at the end of Franquism were privileged simply because they refused to be thrown into the same miserable situation as other workers. This is the political philosophy of socialism.

Secondly there were the use of technology as a means of eliminateing workers' control and the role of the dockers' collective. So the practical application of the decree showed that all the machines working on th dockside were to be used by only one of the four categories mentioned in the decree. This was not a question of professionality in the selection, but merely one concerning the conditions of work, that is, the handling of the machines would be taken over by those directly employed by the companies and probably with greater job security. This meant that the most important operations would no longer be carried out by the dockers in the present sense of the word, but by employees without the same conditions as the others. It is evident that new technology (software and hardware) are increasingly important in the ports. The way in which it is introduced lies entirely in the hands of capital and even more so in this case than in others because the consequences are not merely quantitative (reduction in the size of the workforce), but also qualitative (transformation of the work process leading to the physical elimination of the docker in terms of his function and presence).

During the final days before the general election, the National Labour Director asked the dockers to observe a truce seeing that, since the government had not made it's final opinion known, this meant that it was favourable to negotiations. But only to negotiations to decide the way in which to apply the decree. From a certain point of view, one could say that the discussions on this basis were somewhat of a

finding they were putting black and white television sets in cartons with 'English' on the outside. They were making them for Sharps, in China. £5 was a very good wage in that factory. It rammed home to our lot that we are one world, that there's no way you could stop the Chinese making those products and that we had better be looking at some more developed product, to get at the leading edge of technology.

retreat for the dockers, but, since the strike was against the decree itself, the ambiguities of the text left ample space to forward the dockers' interests. In fact their position seemed to become stronger during the strike and one could say that nothing was lost. The discussion recommenced at the beginning of July.
Even though the dockers had shown a unitary solidarity in action, their cohesion was always precarious. One should not forget the possibility of inter-port competition to win new traffic. Nor should one forget that this strike was the direct result of the deep transformation in the organization of maritime traffic worldwide over the last few years. The oligopolistic system of traffic control which fixed tarrifs and shared out the shipping lanes for goods in regular conferences (of large transport organizations headed by Lloyds) was coming unstuck because of outsider competition (new companies not part of the conferences, e.g. Evergreen) which "unfairly" cut freight rates and offered permanent services on routes round the world. All this must be added to the new chance for the Mediterranean in overturning the relations of power existing up to the present between the ports in different countries or even within the same country. Trade union negotiations deriving their strategy in relation to these problems would readopt the logic of capital in preserving employment in its own port. The offer of better work conditions would inevitably lead to a division of forces and the break down of the dockers' solidarity. This was the most dangerous trap the strike could fall in to. Naturally, negotiations had to be undertaken because we are not dealing with a struggle leading to the abolition of wage labour, but of one to maintain that part of control over their own work which the dockers had won and which the socialist government wished to remove.
One must add that there were already differences among the dockers which could become determinant in the outcome to the struggle. For example, the composition of the work squads on the dockside differed from port to port, meaning a lower cost in freight handling which is the key point in competition between enterprises. Thus the fear of losing traffic (a company could at any time select another port for future trade) could give rise to a tactic in which everyone would support the interest of "his" port. If such a tactic were to prevail in this protectionist way, the strike would collapse. Since solidarity can only be based on the real cohesion of material conditions of work, there was the threat, a latent dividing line: companies blackmailing with threats to switch traffic was already an argument which weighed heavily on the discussions and consciousness of the collective and could lead to an extremely bad defeat for the dockers if it became determinant in the strike strategy. I feel that it was a question of a potential dividing line which could lead to a real split in the class unity in this sector. That would all depend on the dockers' capacity to react with a general point of



view: the only consideration of their short term interests could thus create the most favourable conditions for developing links of solidarity going beyond the particularity of each port.
One cannot leave out the political manoeuvre of the government in this restructuring of the ports: they wished to eliminate the last case of a rank and file workers' movement still existing in Spain. To the extent that the dockers were organized in an "atypical" union which was subject to unforeseen and incontrollable rank and file reaction (there was no real bureaucratic control of the classical kind), the manoevre wished to force the union to become a "responsible" one or simply to eliminate it. The ports would fall under the control of the UGT with the usual policy of "having connections" found in the PSOE. The strike at Algesiras (see La Estiba no.11) was the first attempt, a preliminary test before setting about the decree and the balance of power to be struggles over. The concession to Sea-Land of a new container terminal in the port was an attempt to break the dockers' organization's monopoly in recruitment. To achieve this aim, they tried the direct recruitment of new dockers not on the lists of dockers held by the dockers' rank and file organization. Naturally these dockers were to be signed up by the UGT. The management of the multinational and the government representatives were taken by surprise by the speed of the dockers' response and ths size of the threat of mobilization. They held back at Algesiras to start negotiations... but they had certainly profited from this lesson and it would come in useful in the next round.
Reconversion in this sector was not undertaken in the same way as in the shipyards. Here we are not dealing with an obsolete, but a dynamic sector, with a bright future and of capital importance for Spain (80% imports and 94% exports pass through the ports). This situation was the one that laid the basis of class action. Besides, as the struggle at Algesiras showed, h ever strong capital is, it can be made to "see reason" when workers' action involves a vulnerable sector in the economy in a forceful way. The dockers knew this and were able to avoid all the traps and tricks to use this force. But they also knew that it would be a long struggle given their isolation and the governmant's margin of advantage. They understood that the set backs to struggles against restructuring in other sectors could not be taken into consideration as they were a completely different kettle of fish.
(another text will appear in the next Echanges on this strike).
For more details see La Estiba: organ of the Coordinadora nos. 16-18. These articles have now been translated in Spanish Dock Strike 1986 (BM Blob - London WC13XX).
Direct contacts: OEPB (Estibadores Portuarios de Barcelona - Calle del Mare 97 - Barcelona 3
or: FAC (Federacion Autonoma de Colectivos) - Calle Rec Comptal 18, I°, I A - Barcelona

**ILR: Are you affiliated to any international trade secretariat?**

**EH:** I can't see that they're a major factor in international industrial affairs. We've sought in recent years to have more bilateral contacts with friendly unions, for example with the Scandinavian unions and with the All China Federation of Trade Unions. We have set up a college to up-grade the technical training of our electricians. We sell that training to industry and we use the profit to retrain our unemployed electricians so that they become more capable of finding employment. The All China Federation of Trade Unions sent over 12 people and we trained them as instructors and they've set up an identical school in China – the first of a network in China. So there's internationalism in action. (We are) The only trade union in the western world that's in technical education but we've not kept it to ourselves, we've helped our colleagues in China, not in a market union.

Etcetera - Correspondencia de la Guerra Social (see address of FAC above). June 1986: The revolution in discussion - Crisis and emigration - Racism and resistence - Again on realism - Review of Bernat Muniesa The Catalan Bourgeoisie in the Second Republic (1931-6) - Fully in the MIL: documents on MIL's activity with a preface and in four chapters (1868-68 - to the end of the night; 1969-71 - between revolution and the trenches; 1972-3 - fully in the MIL; 1973-4 - lost balls; Appendices).

THE NETHERLANDS

Last Autumn strikes broke out in different sectors throughout the country all characterized by attempts to use methods of struggle more effective than those proposed by the unions. So in November the firemen (local employees) started a strike in different areas of the Netherlands over bonuses. This strike's originality lay in the use of firefighting equipment (foam extinguishers, hose pipes and fire itself) in the struggle (especially in the bosses offices in the Town Halls). After a while the local authorities had to give in because of the strike at Rotterdam which, being a port, needed the service for reasons of safety. A strike of lorry drivers (employees) at the beginning of December saw wildcat movements block the motorway system several times. But a judgement that stated that the strike was illegal led to a return to work at the union's behest without the demands being met. Various limited struggles among the Rotterdam dockers have occured including one concerning the collective agreement with the bulk handling company "Quick Dispatch" where the workers had to stuggle against the union which wanted to abrogate the agreement as it was too favourable to the dockers. A longer text will be published in Liaisons no. 2.

SCANDINAVIA

Some strikes took place in Finalnd in mid-March, some spontaneously, other called by the unions concerning the wages question but more especially on the flexibility of working hours. Sweden saw the same type of struggles, but it was in Norway that they took an unexpected turn: the bosses union locked out 100,000 workers, not because they were on strike or threatening to strike, but to force the workers' union (LO) to accept its proposals in the negotiations underway on wages and work conditions.

GREAT BRITAIN

Picket (c/o Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N19DX)

This bulletin has been published independently of the union apparatuses by members of the printers' unions NGA and SOGAT dealing solely with the struggle with the Murdoch press group (News International). Every weekend for five months there have been clashes between the police and mass pickets just outside the City of London around the new printing plant belonging to this international press and audiovisual magnate. This plant is

**ILR: If you're taking a very competitive attitude towards getting investment to this country and the Chinese are doing the same into their free trade zones, don't you feel that you are being played off against other trade unions by the transnationals? Isn't there a Dutch auction between unions to offer more and more preferential deals to the companies?**

**EH:** I don't think the industrial relations scene or an agreement is decisive about whether they're going to come or not. I think the decisive things would be the general level of earnings and skills in the country they were considering. I think it's a further stage when they start dealing with us.



just like a fortress (protected by 4 rows of barbed wire and a hoard of police) designed to resist the 6,000 workers of the 6 old newspapers previously published in Fleet Street. The ultramodern plant can turn out the same quantity with 600 workers recruited through the "modern" union, the electricians EEPTU so breaking the power that derived from traditional demarkations between union categories. The problem remains the same as that mentioned in the previous article. We shall write an article on it because it is difficult to describe a basically simple situation which becomes increasingly complicated when it comes to the relationships between the rank and file, unions and the press group. For now 6,000 workers have been (and still are) sacked, the clashes continue regularly when the mass pickets try to prevent the newspaper lorries from leaving the plant for the newsagents, discussions continue behind the scenes to try to avoid new flare-ups would could, at any moment, take on unexpected dimensions. Those who are following the struggle will find an unknown side to the real action of the rank and file in the 31 issues (to October 1986) of Picket which presents itself as follows. "This is the pickets' first bulletin. It has been written, printed and paid for by two NGA book section members. We met on the picket line and share the same hatred of capitalism and we feel that we should publish this regular bulletin to provide an accurate synthesis of the pickets' action - from the point of view of the pickets themselves - and also to let the pickets exchange opinions on the strike and on ways to make the picketting more effective. We would like to see such a bulletin run by the strikers themselves and we hope that it will be used by the pickets as a useful instrument to spread information and to lead to discussions on the general situation in printing."

The collection of the bulletin is available in three books:

1. 24.1.86. - 3.3.86. nos. 1-4,
2. 1.4.86. - 18.5.86. nos. 5-12,
3. 18.5.86. - 27.7.86. nos. 13-21.

from the address given above.

THIRD WORLD

The Animals on the Farm (Association pour la Communaute Humaine Mondiale, BP 39, 33034 Bordeaux Cedex, France - in French).

The brochure deals with "An essay on the social question in the so-called 'Third World'" and also contains a text recalling the old militant Gaston Davoust (The Refusal to succeed). Send 45 FF made out to D. Cosculluela. This brochure will be reviewed later.

**ILR: In this investment auction, do you see yourself in competition with workers say in West Germany or Japan or in the United States?**

**EH:** Most certainly, yes. I also see myself in competition with my colleagues in the British trade union movement. Soon after I became General Secretary we produced a brochure, a prospectus of the union, saying what we stood for and what we felt was distinctive about our attitudes, and with some commendations from ministers and industrialists. We translated that into Japanese and sent a trade union mission to speak to companies out there. Because of explaining ourselves in that way I think we have a more than even chance of a company looking our way if they come here from Japan.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The U.S. Can be inflexible too - article in the Financial Times by M. Priore:

It is widely, and incorrectly, held in Europe that in the USA there is greater freedom to 'hire and fire' and that American employers have more freedom in this matter than their European counterparts. This may be partially correct, especially in relation to their French fellows; but all the same they are obliged to obey a series of rigid laws and procedures protecting employees and to assure equality in the division of labour. This entails certain costs in sacking workers and leads to the slowing of growth as in Europe.

This by and large covers the distribution of jobs within the firm. The management does not control which worker does which job, nor which worker in the job affected is to be sacked, nor, for those remaining, who will do what. This is decided by collective agreements (collective bargaining) made with the unions and, in non-unionized factories, there is a series of regulations based on the model of the unionized ones.

These rules give great importance to seniority which implies that in cases of sackings followed by re-hiring, the more "senior" workers have to be re-hired before any new workers are taken on.

This very rigid system works in the following way: each worker is given a certain job when he is taken on and is placed on a pay ladder based on seniority. The worker that earns most is the one hired the longest time ago. If he dies or retires, all the other workers take one step up the ladder.

This leads to enormous costs of movement: if a factory with 150 workers has to replace one of them, all 150 of them must be moved. If the employer wishes to cut one job, he has to move the remaining 149 to other jobs. And, on top, these costs are increased by those of training for the new jobs.

There is another area of rigidity which worries American employers, perhaps even more so than the one already mentioned. Employers are obliged to respect the "rules of work" which define precisely the content of each post. The employers would gladly get rid of this and have turned their attention to Europe which is more flexible in the matter. They attribute stagnation in productivity in America to these over-rigid rules.

What we have mentioned mainly affects blue collar workers while work rules and the seniority system are largely absent in the white collar sector, mainly because until now there has been no job loss in that sector.

The kind of jobs that might correspond to the image one tries to spread in Europe is that of office or shopworkers (jobs taken in the main by women and at the lowest end of the scale). The rapid introduction of bank and insurance computerization could for the first time lead to massive sackings.



Paul Blumberg has studied the changes in wages since 1947 and this sociologist clearly shows in his book Inequality in the Age of Decline (1980) that:

- since 1965 real wages have ceased to rise, affecting different sectors in different ways
- according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the overall real wage bill for workers has fallen by about 2% between 1965 and 1979
- if one takes individual sectors, mining is the only sector where significant real gains (+ 20% 1968-78) have been made, with + 7·4% in industrial manufacturing, + 1·6% in building, + 4·5% in services, but with falls in shops (-3·6%), banking and insurance (-5%)
- if one takes individual professions, the blue collar workers in traditional industries with strong unions have been able to increase their buying power between 1969 and 1978 considerably. This little group includes car workers, steel workers and miners. The real wages of a steelworker have risen 34·9%, a coalminer 34·1% and those of a car worker 25·4%.

Workers in the shoe making and textile sectors have seen their wages fall by 4 to 7%, bank employees by 7·9%, employees in insurance companies by 3·7% and college professors by 7·1%, finally librarians by 10·3%.

- one should note that the wages of blue collar workers in the protected sectors have risen much more than those of shop and bank workers.

Expressed in a percentage of the wages of these workers, a car worker earns:

| Job | 1958 | 1968 | 1978 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bank worker | 155% | 162% | 213% |
| Worker in a large store | 185% | 179% | 214% |

- the erosion of wages in the public sector was very rapid in the 70s: between 1971 and 1976 the real wages of council workers in many cities fell: - 33% in Buffalo, - 27% in Pittsburgh, - 26% in Atlanta, - 22% in San Francisco and New York, - 16% in Chicago.

PICKET

C/O Housmans Bookshop - 5 Caledonian Road - London N1 9DX

Full set of Picket in binder to address above

n° 1: 24/I/86 to 31st march ( n° 1 to 4 )

n° 2: Ist april to I8 may ( n° 5 to 12 )

n° 3: I8 may to 27 july ( n° I3 to 21 )

n° 4: 28 july to 7 october ( n° 22 to 28 )

n° 5: 8 october to 21 november ( n° 29 to 35 )

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# AT SANYO'S ARKANSAS PLANT THE MAGIC ISN'T WORKING

It's a new American folktale—popularized even in a recent movie, *Gung Ho*. U. S. managers run a once-successful factory into the ground. The Japanese arrive, pour in capital, and apply legendary management skills. Productivity soars, and Americans and Japanese walk together into the sunset.

That tidy ending hasn't played in Forrest City, Ark., where Sanyo Mfg. Corp. runs a huge television and microwave factory. Bitterness and mistrust linger from a violent strike last October—the second since Sanyo took over the plant. Only half of the factory's 2,400 jobs of two years ago remain, and Sanyo expects to lose money for the second year in a row.

Even usually diplomatic Japanese bosses no longer hide their frustration. "They come here for eight hours' work and eight hours' pay," says Tanemichi Sohma, a Sanyo vice-president. "As long as they get that, they don't care what happens to our production. Here, there's no sacrifice."

What went wrong in Forrest City is a story seldom told about Japanese companies in America. For several years the plant drew rave reviews, as more recent Japanese ventures do now. And while Sanyo's troubles don't appear typical of the Japanese experience here, they could foreshadow problems in the future.

Sanyo bought control of the plant in 1977 from Warwick Electronics Inc., a Whirlpool Corp. unit that primarily made TVs for Sears, Roebuck & Co. Under Warwick, employment was down to 500 from a high of 2,000 workers. Japanese imports were killing U. S. TV makers, and Sears asked Sanyo, another of its suppliers, to acquire the 75% interest in the factory that Sears didn't own.

**MYTHICAL HARMONY.** That was a godsend. Sanyo invested $60 million, put through design changes that enhanced productivity, and added microwave ovens to the plant's product line. It now produces 10 times as many TVs—plus 600 microwave ovens a day—with fewer than three times Warwick's employees.

Sanyo executives and their workers were proud of the turnaround. But today, former managers and officials of the International Union of Electronic Workers concede the harmony was something of a myth. "It was never the case," says a former Sanyo executive. Many of the productivity gains can be traced to product-design changes, a shift to assembly from manufacturing, and what one union official claims was an old-fashioned assembly line "speedup."

Indeed, Sanyo says its plants in Japan boast a 25% productivity advantage over Forrest City. With wages in Japan and the U. S. nearly even, Sanyo attributes much of the difference to vastly different worker attitudes in Japan.

In Forrest City there are no quality circles, company uniforms, job rotation, or just-in-time inventories. The plant is not a prototype of the factory of the future, and union rules prevent Sanyo from gaining many of the advantages it boasts in Japan.

Older operators in Japan, for example, can be removed from production lines to other jobs to make room for more productive employees. "Here, it's Mary's chair," says Charlie Green, vice-president for human resources. "She's sat there for 15 years, and she'll be damned if she's going to move from that spot."

After 10 years, there's still little compromise and little understanding between the 26 Japanese managers and engineers and their U. S. workers. "It's no better, and in a lot of ways, it's worse," says Lindell Houston, president of IUE Local 1106. "Trust really isn't there. Seniority isn't going to cause them to go broke. Bad management will."

The cultural gap is wide. The Piggly Wiggly supermarket may stock bamboo shoots these days, but Forrest City remains a small, isolated town of conservative values in eastern Arkansas. Many of its 13,800 people, half of them white and half black, are uneducated, poor, and apprehensive of change.

"People here are still trying to get over the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on integration of schools," says one community leader, "yet Sanyo is asking them to accept Japanese ideas and technology."

Tension between workers and managers has a long history. Early on, Sanyo wanted to try quality circles but couldn't enlist much support for them. Then frustrated American managers began taking a harder line with labor, according to one former employee. In May, 1985, months before Sanyo was scheduled to open talks on a new contract, it axed the local union president. When talks began in October, Sanyo pressed for greater work-rule flexibility and reduced medical benefits. Management, however, failed to convince union leaders that concessions were necessary.

The demands sparked a 21-day strike. Pickets carried signs that read: "Japs Go Home" and "Remember Pearl Harbor." Windows were broken, guns were fired, a car was overturned, and at one point the plant was nearly overrun by strikers.

**HIGH TENSION.** Japanese managers were shocked. Says Sohma: "You cannot leave this alone. Union leaders are destructive. I want the union to be strong, but I want it to be intelligently strong to help people instead of stirring up things."

The tension remains evident. "The bitterness has not been forgotten," says Darrell Carter, Sanyo's operations vice-president. "In a community as small as Forrest City, it's hard to understand that people who live down the street from you would destroy your personal property."

Union leader Houston harbors bitterness, too. After the strike, he says, Sanyo removed chairs and benches from employee restrooms and suspended its perfect-attendance awards for hourly employees. "They said, 'Let's put this behind us,' but they're still holding a grudge," he says.

Meantime, competition is causing the same kinds of problems that Warwick's managers once had to cope with. "It's funny, because now you hear the Japanese complaining about the Koreans," says Linda Laivins, an 18-year veteran at the plant. "When Warwick was here, they complained about Japan."

*By John A. Byrne in Forrest City*

52 BUSINESS WEEK/JULY 14, 1986



Rebel violence versus hierarchical violence

A chronology of anti state violence on the UK mainland

July 1985 – May 1986

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A review will be published in next issue .

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Echange s et Mouvement
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